

March 2012



REST

REGIONAL EMERGENCY SHELTER TEAM NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our March REST e-newsletter. We are sending this to you because you have shown an interest in what REST is accomplishing or because you have rolled up your sleeves and volunteered your time, resources and energy to making REST's second year a success. We hope you find this newsletter filled with good information about our communities' homeless issues and what REST has been able to contribute in providing emergency shelter services.

REST: March Update

THE NUMBERS:

We have been crowded! We are now entering the home stretch of our winter shelter season and we are seeing a significant jump in the homeless guests handled by REST. Our close partner, Hands of Hope, is also experiencing large numbers of new women and families requesting their services.

Despite some limited rain events, the region's relatively mild weather is continuing. Nevertheless, we have experienced a 30% jump in the number of adults at REST as of March 1st as compared to the same time frame last year. Likewise, other indicators are also much higher. Our children count is up 27% and the number of different people utilizing REST has risen by 15% as compared to last year.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The evening of April 6th will be our last night in operation until next Fall. For volunteers, we are just faced with going back to our normal routines, perhaps getting a bit more sleep or doing more

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Volunteer Spotlight: Deanna & Lester Jennings

This month we are highlighting the men and women who perform the daily evening screening or intake function during the REST sheltering season. One of our most dedicated team leaders or "Keyholders" is Lester and Deanna Jennings. Lester and Deanna have served at least one night each week of the season. During several weeks they are doing their thing on two nights acting as the lead for their team of volunteers.

work on personal projects. But for many of our guests, this date represents a terrible reality as they scramble to find housing or shelter. For many, the options are limited and not at all appealing. Please help REST expand our season next year. In addition to your service, we need your ideas, we need your friends and relatives to get involved, and we need your church to open its facility to the greatest degree possible. We have ten churches who have done a great job this winter in providing compassionate, safe and warm shelter and meals. Others have done amazing work to fill the gap with meals despite having small congregations. We need you to challenge your church leadership to become part of REST.

REST works! The numbers prove it.

TIP OF THE HAT TO OUR INTAKE-ASSESSMENT VOLUNTEERS:

At 5:30 PM every evening since the weekend after Thanksgiving, at least three volunteers arrive to open the Hands of Hope facility to welcome guests who are looking for shelter. This behavioral assessment process involves individual interviews with homeless men and women to ensure that they will be able to observe REST procedures and respect the authority of overnight supervisors and the rights of fellow guests.

While the overwhelming majority of our guests are compliant with these requirements, there have been times whereby our Intake-Assessment volunteers needed to make the tough decision to deny access to some individuals. This is not a small matter as REST Overnight Supervisors rely on Intake-Assessment to make their best judgments to ensure that all accepted guests will not be disruptive after arriving at the church shelter.

This is a tough job that is handled extremely well night after night, seven days a week. REST would like to acknowledge the following volunteers for their faithful duty to this task:

- Darel Abbott
- Susi Benedict
- Judi Cantrill



Born and raised in Duarte, California (just outside of Los Angeles), Lester and Deanna lived around the block from each other and have been together for over 24 years.

Lester was a self-admitted big time rebel in his younger years leading him down a path marked by sporadic homelessness from the age of 16 into his early twenties. Deanna was trained as a teacher and worked for several years at a private Christian school. Difficult employment situations led both of them to the Yuba Sutter area where Lester found work as a truck driver. He is now employed by the Marysville School District while Deanna is working in the day care field.

Members of Cornerstone Church, they have together raised seven children aged 21 to 31 with only the youngest, Josh, still at home.

Lester and Deanna are described by their team members as "amazing", "compassionate",

- Charles Ernst
- Dave Ewen
- Keith Goodson
- Marilyn Hake
- Bill Hawkins
- Carolyn Hawkins
- Carrie Hughes
- Deanna Jennings
- Lester Jennings
- Myranda Jordan
- Nick Jordan
- Lori Kalau
- Teresa Lewis
- Lisa Messick
- Barbara Newsone
- Aaron Ott
- Scott Petersen
- Tamie Russ
- Bernard Van Hal
- Ruth Van Hal
- Judy Wells
- Melissa Wise

REST and Prayer:

by Leah Ewen

As our shelter season draws to a close, I have been thinking about our guests, and my heart breaks for them because their needs can seem so overwhelming. But I have to remind myself that we serve a mighty God and we must remember that "though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds."

<2 Cor 10:3-4>

One of these weapons is prayer. REST has been providing for the physical needs of our guests with food and shelter and we all have seen their expressions of gratitude. Thank you to everyone that has had a part in this! But what about their



"empathetic", and "organized with charm". When observing their interaction with our guests, one is struck by their patience and understanding. Lester's early years and his experience tending to a homeless uncle played a major role in forming his heart to serve the less fortunate in our community. In Deanna, he has a partner whose kindness and even nature make her a natural fit for REST. Lester and Deanna's advice to those who are reluctant to serve is similar to that offered by other REST volunteers. "Don't be intimidated by helping" is their common message. As Deanna states, "Everyone deserves a warm bed and meal. We all need to get over the stereotype that is often played out in our culture. These are just people who need someone to talk to and offer a caring attitude." The Jennings are united in wanting REST to grow into a 12 month shelter offering additional services. Lester and Deanna are certainly doing their part in providing a large amount of grace to our homeless community.

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY

spiritual needs?

Our vision statement reads: "REST, an organization based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, seeks to provide shelter and food in a loving, encouraging environment to members of our community in emergency situations. We are seeking partners in this venture that share the spirit of love and hospitality and that would demonstrate compassion and concern for, not only the physical needs of the homeless, but recognize their spiritual need for love, acceptance, respect and friendship as well."

I ask that you would continue to pray for REST and our guests in the months to come. We know that people are praying because we can see God's mighty hand at work and this work would not be possible without Him. But we are nearing the end of this shelter season and a great many of our guests will still be in need. Please pray that:

- That everyone involved with REST would finish this season strong and not grow weary in carrying the burden of others. <Acts 20:24 & Gal 6:9>
- For our guests, softened hearts to hear the Good News of Jesus so that their lives can truly be changed because we can help improve their earthly existence but only God can give them eternal life. <Rom 6:23>
- Wisdom and discernment for REST Board Members as we meet over the spring, summer and fall to plan for next year's sheltering season. <Prov 1>
- That God's will be done in and through REST and its volunteers, and that He alone will be glorified through our efforts. <Rev 4:11>

Thank you for being a part of REST!

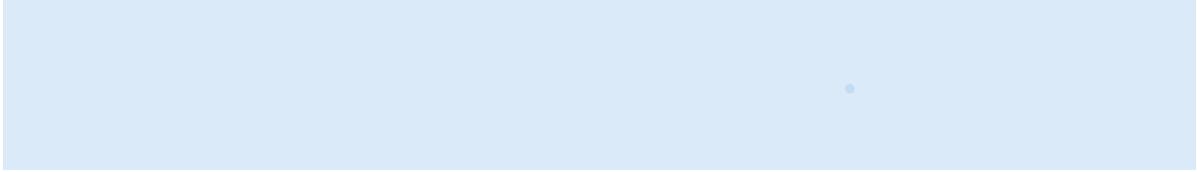
DONORS!

We greatly appreciate all the donations our local businesses have made in support of REST. If you would like to make a donation, of any size, we greatly appreciate it. REST is a non-profit corporation. All donations are tax deductible. Donations can be sent to REST, P.O. Box 688, Yuba City, CA 95992.

WARMTH NOURISHMENT COMPASSION

REST Hosting Churches

St John's Episcopal Church - Marysville
St Andrew Presbyterian Church - Yuba City
Church of Glad Tidings - Yuba City
River Valley Christian Fellowship Church - Yuba City
Cornerstone Church - Yuba City
Seventh Day Adventist Church - Yuba City
First Presbyterian Church - Marysville
First United Methodist Church - Yuba City
St Isidore Catholic Church - Yuba City
North Valley Calvary Chapel Church - Yuba City



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